


Comber Grove Primary School



Lone Working Policy 2022-2023

Agreed by:	Full Governing Body Meeting
Signed:	
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Review Date:	December 2023

'Small School. Big Heart!'

1. Introduction

The Governing Body of Comberrove Primary School is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment.

Lone working is to be actively discouraged and alternatives should be investigated. However, it is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, grounds, cleaning staff or contractors may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This method of working may introduce risks into a normally non-hazardous work activity.

Risk assessment is the key to safe working. Managers must undertake a risk assessment of all activities where lone working cannot be eliminated and suitable control measures should be implemented to reduce levels of risk as low as reasonably practicable.

It should also be remembered that there may be situations where assessment shows that working alone is not an acceptable risk, even when controls are applied.

2. Categories of Lone Working:

- Those who work in an otherwise unoccupied building
- Those who work in an isolated part of a building/school grounds
- Those responding to an alarm call out after normal school hours
- Staff who undertake home visiting
- Staff who travel between workplaces and other off site locations
- Home working

3. Definition of lone working

'A lone worker can be defined as any employee who works in isolation from their colleagues either inside or outside a building. This can include staff who are driving, attending meetings either inside or outside normal working hours, visiting schools, centres, homes or other premises or sites as part of their work. This definition can include, teachers, engineers, social workers, librarians, inspectors, nurses, trainers, health and safety advisers etc. (This list is not exhaustive)'

This would include situations where;

- Only one person is working on the premises
- In larger buildings, situations where people work in a remote part of the building away from other staff.
- People who work outside normal hours eg Emergency Duty Team
- People who work amongst the community e.g. social workers, home care staff, Council maintenance staff, Housing officers etc.,
- Teachers who work in isolation from their colleagues with groups of children.

4. Note on lone working risk assessment

Identify the hazards, assess the risks involved and put measures in place to avoid or control the risks. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that all members of staff have read and understood the Lone Working Policy & Risk Assessment.

A risk assessment must be undertaken for each Lone Worker / lone working episode.

Hazards identified will be evaluated by the Headteacher /Health and Safety Coordinator for the likelihood of the hazard causing harm. Measures will be introduced if the assessment shows that existing precautions are inadequate to eliminate or adequately control the hazard. Contractors will be given a copy of the Lone Working Policy & Risk Assessment and

will be required to complete an assessment relevant to the work they are undertaking before starting work. The Contractor is required to fully comply with all aspects of the relevant Health & Safety Legislation whilst working on site.

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, however, this task can be delegated to a competent person.

The Headteacher/ Lead Governor for Health & Safety must identify situations where staff work alone and give full consideration to the following.

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Is there a safe access and egress for one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Does the member of staff have a medical condition or disability requiring work adjustment?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- Are there effective communication links? Different methods should be assessed and evaluated as part of a local prevention strategy including panic alarms, two-way communication systems e.g. mobile phones.
- Use of covert distress messages to summon assistance in a discrete manner.
- Is there an effective procedure for recording/monitoring staff movement?
- Have contingency plans been established to provide the back up needed if unforeseen events that could jeopardise staff health and safety arise.
- How will the worker be supervised?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young or inexperienced staff especially at risk?
- Can one person safely handle equipment?
- Is there sound knowledge and understanding of health and safety procedures, incident reporting, and guidance information issued to staff
- Are staff trained to diffuse aggressive or violent behaviour or to undertake the necessary action to remain safe
- Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. Emergency procedures should be established and staff trained in them at induction.
- What monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that lone workers remain safe?
- Lone workers must have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers must carry a first aid kit for treating minor injuries.
- Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

5. Control measures

Staff should seek the permission of the Headteacher/ Lead Governor for Health & Safety to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours. Apart from the Headteacher, only those outlined in this policy have keys to the building.

The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working.

Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation by the Headteacher. Whenever possible it is recommended that staff work with a partner.

Staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of a break in or intruders. Normally the intruder alarm will have been activated, and the Security Services monitor the alarm system will first call key holders and would then call the police.

Staff should lock doors when lone working and ensure that areas of the school not in use are kept secure.

Staff must not place themselves in danger by challenging intruders or vandals but should call the police for assistance.

Lone workers should ensure that they carry the panic button (located in the front office) when working alone in the building. They need to ensure that they return it to its safe space when they leave.

Staff should not work alone if they have medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

All lone working staff should establish and record on their risk assessment their own checking in and out system with family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact number (Headteacher, or the security company) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.

Staff working alone have a responsibility for making themselves familiar with and following the School's safety procedures and location of safety equipment.

Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

In the situation where two or more people are working in isolated areas of an otherwise unoccupied building, personnel should keep each other informed about their movements by using a walkie – talkie or mobile phone.

Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height, any task that has been identified as medium or high risk or which are potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

Staff working at height in an isolated building must follow Height Procedures.

The same applies for any external contractor who may be working on electrical, gas, confined spaces, hot works or other and must be provided with the necessary paperwork for signing before any work is undertaken and to establish if they will be working alone.

All school personnel are reminded about the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance. It is the responsibility of all school personnel and contractors to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Headteacher.

If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury.

The School respects the right of the employee, under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, to refuse to carry out work where there is a serious and imminent risk of danger. They also can advise others to do the same without being dismissed as a result. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of Headteacher any aspect of work-related risks.

The Headteacher and/or Lead Governor for Health and Safety will regularly monitor the implementation of these procedures.

Following any incident an investigation will be carried out and its findings used to inform change to procedures and working practices.

General Issues;

- I. Lone workers should carry with them emergency telephone numbers and they should know when the telephone points are manned.
- II. In appropriate cases, contact times should be arranged when lone workers are contacted to verify their location and their safety.
- III. The office based contact must have a clear plan of what to do if the lone worker needs help, or they cannot contact them.

Violence issues;

- IV. In situations where the risk assessment indicates that the personal safety of the lone worker may be at risk because of violence, lone workers may be issued with a personal alarm and trained fully in how to use it.
- V. Lone workers in other peoples' homes need to be conscious of their position and their exit strategy, which wherever possible should be preplanned.
- VI. Home visits should wherever possible be pre-arranged, and managers should know in advance how many people workers should be expecting to meet. This should be taken into account when deciding if a lone visit is tenable. If the expected numbers are exceeded on a lone visit the interview should be cancelled and the lone worker should withdraw.
- VII. People conducting interviews in an office building where violence may be an issue, need to be aware of the room layout and keep their exit path clear. They should be closer to the exit than the interviewee. The room should be equipped with a discreet alarm within reach of the interviewer, in order to attract attention for assistance from office staff.

Work Outside of Normal Hours

- VIII. In many cases, subject to risk assessment, a base 'out of Hours' contact should be agreed in advance. This person must be available, even at a home location for the duration of the work.
- IX. The out of Hours contact should have a number to call to contact the lone worker.
- X. Contact should be made by the lone worker at the end of their work, and preferably when they have returned home safely.
- XI. The contact person should have clear instructions as to their actions should any of the contact arrangements fail.

6. Training Information, instruction, training and Supervision are essential elements in ensuring that action plans arising from lone working risk assessments are executed properly and effectively. Staff should be briefed and trained where necessary on the planned control measures following risk assessment. The training and information needs to be

comprehensive as does the risk assessment in order to cover all possible anticipated outcomes.

7. Who is at risk (and when)

The lone working assessment must consider who might be harmed as a result of our activities, for example, employees, visitors and contractors.

The following table provides details of some specific aspects for consideration when assessing the suitability of lone working for Comber Grove Primary School employees:

New and expectant mothers	Impaired ability to carry out physically strenuous work. Later stages of pregnancy may increase the risk of falls through reduced visibility and changes to mobility. Risk of early labour or miscarriage through physical assault. Please note: a specific risk assessment is provided for New and Expectant Mothers on Schools' PeopleNet.
Young people	Lack of experience and level of maturity. Inability to concentrate for long periods.
Disability	Impact on ability to make unassisted evacuation. Ability to identify that evacuation is required.
New employees, trainees including inexperienced volunteers	Lack of familiarity through level of experience or training needs.
Specific medical conditions	Some individuals may have medical conditions that make them unsuitable for working alone. These may include some health conditions, such as unstable epilepsy or diabetes. The consideration of medical conditions should include both routine activities and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens on the individual.

The following table provides examples of individual consideration for non-employees

Contractors	Unfamiliar with site layout, emergency procedures, adjacent activities and site hazards.
Person who uses the service attending Comber Grove Primary School site for a one-to-one meeting.	Unfamiliar with exit route from meeting room, may become agitated and need to leave the room in anger.

Risk Category	Control Measures
<p>Category 1 Employees working in offices or other secure locations outside of normal working hours or who routinely work in these locations on their own. Work of a low-risk office type.</p> <p>Examples would include Teachers,</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees must be briefed on the measures required to ensure their workplace is secure if they are lone working and emergency procedures. • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/colleagues. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number.

<p>office-based employees, travelling to meetings.</p>	<p>For guidance and consideration</p> <p>Refer to low risk office lone working procedure</p>
<p>Category 2 Employees working in locations where security is inadequate or where shared premises would allow non-authorised access to their work area. Employees working in unfamiliar locations but not meeting members of the public. Employees visiting established clients who have been assessed as presenting no risk to employees. Employees responding to intruder alarm calls for property out of hours. Firefighters conducting home fire risk assessments or similar activities.</p> <p>Examples would include Groundsmen / school caretakers, employees whose duties include responding to out of hours intruder alarm calls, employees working in shared offices with poor security arrangements, some home care employees, firefighters fitting smoke detectors in residents' properties by appointment.</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For out of hours alarm calls each team must have clear instructions for employees. • Employees who are expected to respond to alarm callouts must have access to a personally issued work mobile with appropriate reception or have indicated that they are willing to use their personal mobile in such circumstances and that it has appropriate network coverage for the area in question. Where possible, lone working to respond to an alarm should be avoided through the use of contracted key holder arrangements. Where it is not possible then a buddy/automated buddy arrangement must be put in place. • Where dealing with violence and aggression training is not provided, the line manager should give clear information to lone workers on what work can and cannot be done alone; when to withdraw or stop work; communication and check-in procedures; signs of escalating violence and aggression and emergency procedures. • Where the problem relates to poor security allowing un-authorised access to work areas, the security of the building should be reviewed, if necessary, with the other occupiers or landlord and appropriate measures introduced. • Daily work tracking arrangements must be put in place in line with the level of risk involved • All employees must record an itinerary of their movements that is accessible to their manager/colleagues. Details made available should include location, car make, model, registration number and mobile phone number. • Consider issuing a personal safety alarm. • Provide all other relevant assessment information, for example, where alarms are located in private meeting rooms. <p>For guidance and consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to ensuring that employees receive appropriate training in dealing with confrontational situations such as the Suzy Lamplugh Trust's dealing with Violence and Aggression 1 day course available through HR Learning and Development.

<p>Category 3 Employees who visit unknown clients or clients who are known to present challenging or aggressive behaviour in their own homes in order to provide a service. Employees who routinely work alone in remote locations.</p> <p>Examples would include Youth Offending team employees, Assessment and family support workers, Mobile Library employees, EDT out of hours team.</p>	<p>Mandatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees dealing with clients must receive training on dealing with confrontational situations dealing with violence and aggression 1 day course. This training should be repeated annually. • Information to include what work can and cannot be done alone; when to withdraw or stop work; communication arrangements and emergency procedures. • A form of employees tracking system must be introduced and its use enforced. This could either be a buddy system or an automated system. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team will be able to advise on which system would be most suitable. • Employees must be briefed on the procedures for lone working before they start such work for the first time and at least 6 monthly thereafter. Records of these briefings should be maintained. • Where a client presents a known risk of violence, then the visit should be re-arranged for a venue where appropriate levels of security or assistance are available. If there are particular reasons for the visit to take place at the client's home, then at least 2 people should attend. • Consider issuing a personal safety alarm. • Provide all other relevant assessment information
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8. Emergency arrangements

Lone workers should be capable of responding to foreseeable emergencies through the development of planned arrangements, for example, fire and first aid need (see policy on Schools' PeopleNet). The requirements for emergency will depend on the nature of the work being carried out.

Where it is possible a lone worker should withdraw from circumstances of escalating violence and aggression towards them.

Where a lone worker monitoring system is used it must include a means to raise the alarm in the event of (a) failure to contact a lone worker (b) an emergency request for assistance.

9. Risk assessment recording

Lone working issues may be considered as part of an overall risk assessment of a job role or activity. However, where lone working has not been considered as part of other risk assessments, a specific risk assessment must be carried out. It is important to note that the original risk assessment may change as the activity itself progresses and further information on the competency of lone workers has been provided in this guide.

10. Risk assessment review

Lone working risk assessments must be regularly reviewed in line with changes which have been identified, for example, a violent incident has occurred during the last visit, and it is no longer safe to lone work in the future. All incidents and/or previously unforeseeable risks must be reported by the lone worker as soon as possible, reviewed by the manager and flagged on any systems which will warn other workers of the risk. If no changes have

occurred within a twelve-month period, then lone working risk assessments should be reviewed at that point.

Head Teacher must ensure that there are adequate reporting and feedback mechanisms are in place which allow for new information to be gathered about any changes which impact on the risk assessment. Changes to working practice must be assessed and communicated to all relevant employees.

Appendix 1

Hazards

These may include, for example:

- A potential for violence or threatening behaviour towards an individual carrying cash or high value equipment.
- The use of machinery, electrical or other equipment or chemicals.
- Working in remote areas, particularly after dark and outside normal working hours.
- Encountering intruders.
- Working at heights, using ladders and lifting.
- Competency, ability and medical condition of the individual.

Control Measures

In order to manage the risks identified, we have introduced the following control measures:

- Ensure that external doors are kept locked when lone working.
- Staff must not arrange meetings with parents or members of the public when lone working. All meetings must be arranged during school occupancy times or when there is more than one member of staff on site for the duration of the meeting.
- Not handle cash when lone working.
- Late meetings must finish promptly and not leave one member of staff alone on site.
- Know, and follow, relevant safe working procedures and guidelines including operating machinery and using hazardous substances
- Staff must not approach, or let into the building, unauthorised persons when lone working.
- Inform the Head Teacher or health and safety representative of any relevant medical conditions.
- Staff attending alarm activations will only attend either with police support or in pairs. An outside check of the premises must be carried out, to ascertain if entry has been gained, before entering the school. If there is sign of an entry police support **must** be gained before entering school.

Staff are advised to:

- Avoid lone working wherever possible by arranging to work in pairs or as a group.
- Not to do anything to put themselves in danger.
- Carry a mobile phone or stay near the school telephone at all times, when lone working, in case of emergency.
- Let someone know you are coming into work, how long you expect to be and when you are leaving.
- Comply with fire evacuation procedures.
- Consider weather conditions before coming into and while at work.

Unacceptable Lone Working

The following activities are not to be carried out by lone workers under any circumstances:

- **Working at height.**
- **Manual handling of heavy or bulky items.**
- **Undertaking work for which they are not trained e.g. operating machinery.**

Appendix 2

Interview Room within a building where violence could be an issue.

Typical Control Measures.

1. Other local staff should be aware of the interview taking place.
2. An alarm should be provided;
 - (a) Preferably as a permanent fixture in the interview room which will indicate in an adjacent office. - This alarm could be discreet and only detectable in the adjacent office. In this case the operating button would also be discreet, hidden from the interviewee, so that the interviewee is unaware of the alarm being raised.
 - (b) If an alarm is not fitted in the interview room. The interviewer should have with them a personal attack alarm. c. An arrangement should be made to ensure that someone will respond in the office, if the alarm is initiated, and as to what that response should be. e.g. In the case of a.- the alarm should be sounded as soon as there are signs of agitation, and the person who responds to the alarm would enter the room calmly on a pre-arranged pretext.
3. The room should be arranged so that the interviewer is closer to the door than the interviewee in order to aid escape if necessary, and to prevent their exit being blocked.
4. Furniture in the room should be sparse, and either too heavy to lift or fixed to the floor. All of these measures may not be necessary, but in all cases the situation should be risk assessed and suitable control measures put in place.

APPENDIX 3

A Person working alone in the community.

Typical Control Measures

1. Work bases/Managers/Supervisors should be aware of where all lone workers will be during the day – inevitably a daily plan will be subject to change, however an updating system should be considered to allow flexibility.
2. The lone worker should be able to contact their base if necessary, and someone should be available to receive messages, or another system arranged for maintaining contact. As an alternative or in order to promote a level of support, lone workers may meet up with each other at specified times during the working day to maintain contact.
3. Supervisors should consider a routine of site visits to keep in touch with lone workers and the conditions in which they are operating.
4. Where appropriate a coded message system could be used when contacting base in order to signal danger or cause for alarm.
5. Lone workers need to be able to react correctly if they are injured, they should have access to a first aid pack for minor cuts etc, but they should also have a plan of action for more major incidents. This should be considered as part of the risk assessment and the solutions may differ depending on the nature of the task.
6. Lone workers should be kept informed of any known danger areas (where previous experience has indicated there may be danger)
7. Train staff how to deal with the lone worker based issues they are likely to encounter and the control measures in place to support them.
8. Arrange daily visits such that higher risk visits (if they are still considered suitable for lone working) are not made towards the end of the day.

A risk assessment of individual situations should indicate where control measures are required and the measures above are included to provide some examples of possible control measures.